

REPUBLIC CITY UNDERGROUND

Lore Setup

In an Alternate Reality Republic City, Korra was not born in time for the Harmonic Convergence in 171 AG. As such, during the Harmonic Convergence, many new benders were created throughout the world; resulting in roughly 1-in-4 people being able to bend. Korra is born 8 years later, in 179 AG. However, at the age of 2 before her ability to bend manifests, Korra dies.

Set 21 years after the Harmonic Convergence, in 192 AG, Republic City's advancements have stagnated and corruption in all areas is rising. Warring factions of benders and non-benders, a growing distaste of all benders and pro-bending, corruption within The State, and a deepening divide between the rich and poor have warped Republic City in unknown, mostly negative, ways.

Playing the Game

Republic City Underground, and Urban Shadows (this game's base material) work as a dance between the players and the MC. This is not like a long-running series where we follow the same characters. You are a piece of this world, not the center of it. It will spin whether you are aware of it or not. You are but one part in an ever-changing world, soon forgotten to the sands of time.

As a player, understand that you are not the only one with an agenda to work towards. Everyone has something they need to do, and someone they owe a Debt. If you wish to succeed, know that someone else wishes you fail.

As the MC, realise your job is to make this world feel dangerous. There are many more people in this world than your group of Player Characters. As such, put them in binds that they must force themselves out of. Make them have to choose one awful thing or another. Nothing in this world should be easy. Keep everything moving, interesting, deceiving, and deadly because of it. Make them look over their shoulder, and at other PC's. And sometimes, simply let them dig their own grave.

Holdovers from The Legend of Korra

Because Republic City Underground has various elements of The Legend of Korra, it may be tempting to incorporate things like The White Lotus, The Equalists, and other memorable elements. There is nothing wrong with this, but do not be scared to add new groups. This is an evolving world where anything can happen. People will hold new positions, will support new causes, and despise new adversaries. Also, do not be afraid of push the narrative into other parts of the world. The world will still spin, and that includes other places besides Republic City. Maybe an insurrection is taking over a large Earthbender city far to the East. If a character, or the entire group, wishes to explore that part of the world, let them. However, if they do not, know that this insurrection can move to Republic City. This world is vast and teaming with people and places of all types, so do not be afraid to explore them.

SESSION MOVES

Session Start

At the beginning of a session, at the behest of the MC, each character tells the group about one thing that concerns them, or someone from the group or an NPC they trust the least.

The MC, at the their own behest, may tell the group what The State is doing currently. This information should be vague, and can pertain to anything. The State may be the police, the Government, or both.

Session End

At the end of a session, if you mark all 5 Factions, you can mark any 1 piece of information on your sheet. Add 1 to any Faction, subtract 1 from any other Faction.

Note: This tracking negates any advancements; must mark all 5 within that single session.

HARM + HEAL

When your character becomes injured, mark harm on your character sheet. All characters have a max 7 harm.

Harm

Harm is applied to various weapons. Melee weapons (bat, stick) have a base of 1 harm per strike; sharp weapons (knife, spear) have a base of 2 harm. Situations have the ability to increase or decrease this amount.

Harm caused by bending is more situational, but has a base harm of 1. The type of bending will apply various tags (ex. Fire = burning), which can deal additional harm if the situation exists.

Armor

Armor blocks damage from weapons, but once blocked is removed. If the damage negates armor, apply harm towards base 7 harm. (armor won't block drowning)

Healing

Healing is applied through medical care, and naturally heals 1 harm per day.

BASIC MOVES

For all moves, roll 2D6 and apply appropriate modifiers. On 10+, you succeed fully. On 7-9, you succeed, but only partially; unwanted effects are situational. On a 2-6, you fail and the MC takes a hard move against you, or the party as a whole.

Unleash an Attack

When you unleash an attack on someone, roll + Reflex. On a hit, inflict harm as desired and choose 1:

- Inflict Terrible harm
- Take something from them
- Put someone in a place of your choosing

On a 7-9, MC chooses 1:

- They inflict harm on you
- You find yourself in a bad spot

Escape a Situation

When you take advantage of an opening to escape a situation, roll + Reflex. On a hit, you get away. On a 10+, choose 1. On 7-9, choose 2:

- You suffer harm during your escape
- You end up in another dangerous situation
- You leave something important behind
- You owe someone a Debt for your escape
- You go overboard & leave a trail for others to follow

Figure Someone Out

When you try to figure someone out, roll + Mind. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1, character you're trying to figure out holds 1.

- Who's pulling your strings?
- What's your beef with ___?
- What are you hoping to gain?
- How could I get your character to ___?
- What do you worry might happen?
- How could I put you in my Debt?

If in the same Faction, add +1 to roll.

Mislead, Distract, or Trick

When you try to mislead, distract, or trick someone, roll + Mind. On a hit, they are fooled for the moment. On a 10+, pick 3. On 7-9, pick 2:

- You create an opportunity
- You expose a weakness or flaw
- You confuse them for the moment
- You avoid further entanglement

Keep The Peace

When things get out of hand and you attempt to Keep the Peace, tell the MC your desire to avoid and roll + Bend. On a 10+, the desire is fulfilled. On 7-9, the MC will add a cost to Keeping the Peace.

Persuade an NPC

When you persuade an NPC through seduction, promises, or threats, roll + Heart. On 10+, they do as you ask with minimal objection. On 7-9, modify to be more in their favor, or demand a Debt.

If you cash in a Debt, upgrade result 1 level.
(fail -> mixed, mixed -> complete)

Lend a Hand/Get in the Way

When you Lend a hand, or Get in the Way after a PC has rolled, roll with their Faction. On a 10+, add or subtract 2 from their roll. On a 7-9, add or subtract 1, and put yourself in danger, entanglement, or cost.

Use Your Skills

When using your ability to bend one of the elements as a utility (ex. Freezing water to stop a burst fire hydrant), or using one of your trainings as a non-bender, roll + Bend. On a 10+, succeed with no consequences. On a 7-9, succeed and choose 1. On a fail, MC chooses 1.

- You cause a disturbance
- You damage something of importance
- The danger level increases
- You destroy a chance to escape
- Your ability to bend is now known
- Your cover is blown
- You are forced into a worse situation
- Well that sucks...

As a non-bender, when rolling to use trainings "Street Smarts" or "Insight/Awareness", Roll 2D6. On 10+, ask 2 Yes/no questions. On 7-9, ask 1 question. On fail, mark 1 question off session.

Fatal Acts

When you perform your Faction's Fatal Act, roll -1.

- On 10+, succeed & mark corruption
- On 7-9, partial success & mark corruption, or succeed and mark 2 corruption
- On Fail, mark 2 corruption & face massive consequences, either now or later. Mark 2 harm, negate armor.

FACTION MOVES

Faction Rolls

When interacting & rolling with a Faction, roll for the Faction of their entity, even if the person you are talking with is not that. (ex. Non-bender is part of firebending gang, roll + Fire) If not part of an entity, roll with their Faction.

Hit the Streets

When you hit the streets to get what you need, name who you're going to and roll + Faction. On a hit, they're available and have what you desire. On 7-9, choose 1:

- Whoever you're going to is juggling their own problems
- Whatever you need is more costly than anticipated
- They need your help with something
- This person has a secret (non-Debt)

Put a Face to a Name

When you put a face to a name or vice versa, roll + Faction. On a hit, you know about them. On a 10+, you've dealt with them before; learn something about them. On 7-9, you know of them, but never interacted with them.

Investigate a Place of Power

When you investigate a Place of Power, roll + Faction that owns it. On 10+, you know part of their dark secrets. On 7-9, you know surface, everyday knowledge.

ADVANCEMENTS

Whenever you mark all 5 Factions, advance 1 level and choose 1 of the relevant options. If you wish to implement something that is of your own choosing, it must be approved by the MC and work within the story.

THE STATE

When interacting or investigating The State, roll with the Faction “Non-Bender”, even if the person you are speaking with is a bender.

The State is all aspects of oversight. When you go into the back room to make your dealings, The State is who you hide from. But their arms are everywhere, hiding sometimes in plain sight. They know much more than you could ever know, and can do things you will never do. Be fearful, but also know that an asset within The State is one of the strongest you can call upon if able.

The State only deals in Debts, the smallest of things will require repayment, sometimes 10 fold. Be mindful when asking for assistance, as it may be a bigger hindrance later on than a help now.

Refusing a Debt raises your attention to The State. Most who are owed a Debt know about their debtor, and if it isn't paid will tell The State. For some, it will garner little attention. For other, it will be the tipping point and put the full force of The State on them.

CORRUPTION

Whenever your character goes to 5 corruption, your character will be retired at the end of the next session.

For Players, realize your character has gone overboard. You've done what all others believe to be the worst things imaginable. Your control over yourself has been broken, and now it is unknown what you will do next.

You should, at this point, also think about what your next character should be. Your cog in the machine of this world is defective, or maybe working as intended. Regardless, your ability to use your character is gone, and it will be forgotten.

For the MC, this character is now yours to play with. This character is now an NPC. The character may have been sent out into the oblivion, but not to you. You may, and very much can, call them back into the world in the future to be a foe to your new characters. And imagine, having to fight your former character.

DEBTS

What is a Debt?

When everyone has their own agenda, you need to keep them accountable. That is what a Debt is. It's that “you owe me one” line when you stick your neck out for them. They hold more weight than you can imagine in a world of corruption. Attain them, honor them, and be sure not to break them.

Do Someone a Favor

When you do someone a favor, they owe you a Debt.

Cash in a Debt

When you cash in a Debt, remind your debtor why they owe you in order to...

...make a Player Character:

- Do you a favor of moderate cost
- Lend a Hand in your efforts
- Get in the way of someone else
- Answer a Question honestly
- Erase a Debt they hold on someone
- Give you a Debt they hold on someone else

... make an NPC:

- Answer a question honestly about their Faction
- Introduce you to a powerful member of their Faction or entity
- Give you a worthy and useful gift without cost
- Erase a Debt they hold on someone
- Give you a Debt they have on someone else
- Upgrade a Persuade an NPC result 1 level

Refuse to Honor a Debt

When you Refuse to Honor a Debt, Roll + Heart. On a 10+, you weasel out of the current deal, but still owe a Debt. On 7-9, choose 1:

- You owe them an additional Debt
- You lose face with their Faction
- The State gets involved
- The State gets alerted

On a Fail, you can't avoid it. Honor your Debt or face the consequences. If still not honored, they pick 2.

Drop Someone's Name

When you Drop the Name of someone who owes you a Debt, Roll + Faction. On a hit, their name carries weight and gives you an opening or opportunity. On 10+, you keep the Debt and mark their Faction. On 7-9, cash in the Debt. On Fail, erase the Debt, and be prepared for the worst.

CHARACTER CREATION NOTES

General

Characters come in all forms, but they fall into 5 main categories: Water, Fire, Earth, Air, Non-Bender. From there, you shape your character through actions and experiences to be towards one thing or another.

Bending Skills/Trainings

Just because you can bend, doesn't mean that you are a master bender. You have your limits and what you are and are not good at. As such, when creating your character and advancing them through this world, you will subsequently learn more about bending and its various uses. Each bending ability or Training will have a use in a specific instance, but if you don't know how to do it, you cannot do it. Explain your actions to the MC and show that you can do what you desire.

NOTES/CLARIFICATIONS:

- **Binded Bending**- If bound to something (tied up, handcuffed), you can still bend.
- **Discrete Use/Quickdraw**- If you need to be discreet about your bending (trying to stealth), or need to do split-second bending, you can.
- **Steal From Other Bender**- If someone, for example, attacks you, you can steal their material used for bending rather than have to gain your own through your own means.
- **Ground Shape**- Able to change the ground; must stay connected to the source.
- **Ground Levitation**- Able to move rock through the air, not connected to source.
- **Dark Flame**- Able to create a dark flame, good for stealthing.
- **Redirect Flow**- Able to send ___ another way; but does not come under your own control.

ANYTHING ELSE

Information for the MC

I will be honest, this set of rules does not cover the full set of mechanics within Urban Shadows. Situations will arise that will come as a shock to you. You will not know what to do, and nothing within this relatively short document will help you decide what to do. That being said, you are the MC. Your judgement should be fair, but also aimed towards making an enjoyable experience. If you are not sure, sometimes you should just run with it and let future you figure it out. Plot holes can be what sparks the next danger for whoever may fall into them. Other times, you need to use your best judgement on both the immediate effects and long term ones. You can say "No" to things if you feel it is necessary. You are to be the one who guides this story along, the bumpers on the bowling alley. You guide the story and interpret other's actions, not dictate them.

It is also perfectly fine to let the players fill in the story themselves. Ask follow-up questions and let the information they give you help you figure out what you as the MC should pursue. There is always more beyond the surface, so don't be scared of others revealing it.

Information for the Players

Republic City Undergrounds revolves around a changing world where nothing is safe. As such, always keep one eye looking behind you. That being said, no one has ever achieved something standing still. Pursue what you feel is necessary to pursue.

Also remember that this world is not fully revealed. If you have something to add, add it into this world. Uncovering what lurks in the shadows is what makes this game as fun as it is. Go down the rabbit hole and figure out who is pulling the strings; just be sure you can pull yourself out again.

RESOURCES

Republic City Underground(RCU) is based off the game "Urban Shadows", a game that uses the "Powered by the Apocalypse" rule set. Republic City Underground does not have a full rule set, nor a D&D styled book for various resources.

That being said, if you need more information on how to play RCU, the best resource would be the Urban Shadows player resources themselves. While not an exact 1-to-1 resource, many of the elements of Urban Shadows were carried over when creating RCU. Many elements of RCU will seem familiar within Urban Shadows. Urban Shadows has examples of the various moves within RCU, excluding a small number of them.

For Lore elements that you could add to RCU, I personally suggest the wealth of knowledge within the Avatar Wikia, which can be found online. The Wikia has all the knowledge you could need to add more ties to the original series or give ideas on where to bring your game into a new direction.

Urban Shadows Resources PDF format:

<https://rpg.rem.uz/Powered%20by%20the%20Apocalypse/Urban%20Shadows/>

Avatar Wikia Homepage:

http://avatar.wikia.com/wiki/Avatar_Wiki